

Women Are Now Fighting on European Battlefields Like Amazons of Old

SEX FORGOTTEN AS GIRLS SHAME MALE SLACKERS

By MARGERY REX.

"Women's mission is not only to give life to man but it is also up to us women to teach men how to defend the new-born freedom."
"I will sacrifice my life for my country, and I am sure that I will find followers among women."

No more striking evidence of the changing attitude of the times could be given than these statements from a recent interview by Vera Butchikareff, a Russian woman warrior, whose glorious military achievement as commander of the "Women's Battalion of Death," in a recent victory over the Germans, is the talk of the world.

Harks Back to Amazons.
It has always seemed that should a scarcity of men at the front require reinforcement by women troops, the tragedy of war would be complete.

But—
This story of the bravery and courage of this country woman, a native of the province of Tomsk, in Russia, who commanded a company of women and rushed into victory, when brothers, cousins and fathers were on the point of deserting and who captured two lines of trenches and made 1,000 soldier prisoners, reads like the fabled stories of Amazons.

At the first call of war, home-makers in every one of the European countries affected by the present war declared bravely: "We women can fight!"

From Germany word came that the crown princess was mobilizing an army of women and that she intended to command them. Then from England came reports of regiments of women being formed throughout the empire. There was much donning of khaki among the women and a style of dressing very military in cut and character affected.

Along with this demonstration there was an enormous amount of work done in a pacific way by these feminine recruits.

Too Startling a Move.
But women at the front! It was really too startling to think of it!

If we hark back to the early women warriors, the Amazon stands out as the most picturesque type of fighter. Armed with lance, battle axe, or bow, usually carrying a crescent shield, and mounted on a fiery charger, she presented a no whit inferior picture than the daring Corsacks, or other mounted soldiers of today.

The widely celebrated Serbian, Sophia Yovanovitch, only nineteen years old, whose bravery at Kirk Kiliseh resulted in the capture of Turkish guns and prisoners without the loss of one of her brave women followers, has inspired many writers, and tales of her bravery and heroism are abroad in the land.

Serbian "League of Death."
The League of Death in Serbia, recruited from all classes of women, is doubtless one of the fiercest rival female organizations to the Russian "Women's Battalion of Death." In this regiment the daughters of peasants fought side by side with the wives of rich merchants. They were all bound together with common cause. With all degrees of caste set aside, they were just a valiant, vigilant, womanly band in arms for loved ones and home.

Kill another Russian heroism in Col. Alexandra Koudasheva, who, early in the war, was in command of the Sixth Ural Cossack Regiment.

In a diary that has been made famous on account of her experiences and impressions, Mme. Koudasheva gives one idea of the sensations experienced by a woman under fire. She writes:

A Woman Under Fire.
"A new life of feeling and thinking begins for a woman on the battlefield. When she feels the invisible fingers of fate close upon her throat, the problems that interested her before and the feelings that occupied her in peaceful feminine activity vanish. It is not the thrill of sport, nor the horror of being killed that takes hold of the mind on the firing line.

Austrian women are also on the honor roll for bravery and daring.

Stefa Falica, a young Croat, enlisted with her husband in the same regiment. Her sex was known and she was not forced to wear men's attire. She has been made a corporal for her bravery in the field.

Stanislawa Ordinska enlisted while masquerading as a man in the Polish Legion for Austria. Before it was discovered she was a woman she had been made a sergeant for bravery.

She was allowed to keep her rank and her gun.

Madame Marfo Malko, the wife of a Russian officer, when war was declared changed her attire and joined the army. She withstood all the rigors of the winter's campaign, but was finally captured. At the prisoner's disinfecting station her refusal to be bathed aroused the suspicions of the Germans, and her sex was discovered.

Inspired by Death.
It was the death of Vera Butchikareff's husband which prompted her to organize the "Women's Battalion of Death," of which she became the commander.

Learning early in May of 1915 that her husband was dead on the German frontier, she enlisted in the Twenty-fifth Reserve Corps of Tomsk, to continue his work, and after a short training went with a company to the front to fill the ranks. The colonel of the regiment enlisted her as a regular in the Twenty-eighth Polish Regiment.

Wounded, But Wouldn't Quit.
For three months Vera Butchikareff fought with a rifle. She was wounded in the leg early in March, 1916, but remained at the front with her comrades. After the commander and the captain were killed she led the soldiers in an attack that proved successful.

She was wounded later by a fragment of shell when fighting on the



MME. BUTCHKAREFF



SOPHIA YOVANOVITCH AND HER FIANCE

MADAME MARFO MALKO (in the center).
CUSTODY OF TEUTONIC CAPTIVE

AN AMAZON—BRONZE STATUETTE FROM HERCULANEUM



COL. ALEXANDRA Koudasheva



STefa FALICA



STANISLAWA ORDINSKA

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Classified Advertising Manager, The Washington Times.

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